

# Aboriginal Cancer Prevention Project

## Case Study:

### **Bowel Cancer Screening Awareness Bullinah Aboriginal Health Service (AHS)**

#### Quick blurb

Bowel cancer screening can often be overlooked by clinicians and patients or assumed patients know about and understand the requirements of the National Bowel Cancer Screening program.

#### What was the situation prior?

Bullinah AHS felt that increasing their eligible patient's bowel cancer screening participation rate was an important step in reaching their Vision of 'A strong, empowered and healthy Goori community', making this a focus area for the AHS. At the commencement of the project the AHS had low rates of patient participation in the national screening program.

#### What quality improvement changes did you make?

We took a structured planned approach to promoting bowel cancer screening; baseline data extraction, targeted health promotion (awareness campaign), education provided by pathology service experts.

1. Firstly we engaged the practice 'Team', identifying our project champion and lead, conducting a baseline data extraction so we could accurately measure our improvements.
2. We then developed and implemented an awareness campaign with input from all staff; prompting the national bowel cancer screening program through posters and flyers in the waiting and consult rooms, and on social media. The campaign prompted conversation and encouraged patients to ask about bowel screening, making bowel screening 'normal' to talk about.
3. We invited experts from the local pathology service to provide professional development to all staff at the practice and ordered additional FOBT kits to have available at the practice.

4. Once we knew who our under-screened patients were from the data extraction we added recalls to patient files and started contacting our under-screened patients to educate and offer appointments.

#### **What were the benefits to your practice of making this change?**

Lots of conversation and engagement! There was more opportunity and experience for doctors and nurses to initiate discussion on the importance of bowel cancer screening. We were able to, more confidently, provide opportunistic screening for patients.

People are talking more and more about bowel cancer screening. It was always such an awkward topic but now we are making it more 'normal' and not something to be embarrassed about. It's just like talking about heart health, diabetes, looking after your eyes.

Excitingly, through the social media avenue we had huge engagement! From 8 Bullinah AHS Facebook posts we had a total of 1209 engagements (average of 152 engagements per post).

Even though our 1 month campaign has 'finished' there is ongoing screening occurring- sustainability!

#### **What is the situation now?**

There are still lots of patients that need screening but with the recent promotion the screening continues. We plan to hold an annual bowel cancer screening promotion in line with the national dates. We are also currently preparing for a women's health event; promoting bowel breast and cervical cancer screening!

Our bowel cancer screening participation rate has increased by 5% in four months! We continue to raise the topic with patients and we continue to screen more than previously.

#### **End with a quote...**

The targeted structured approach of quality improvement works!